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Ecce Deus. Studies of Primitive Christianity. By WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH.

The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, 1912.—pp. xxiv, 252.

The German translation of this book, which preceded the publication of the English original, was dedicated to "the manes of Origen." There is a certain propriety in this homage paid to the great Alexandrian thinker by the most consistent employer of the allegorical method in modern times. In the essays that were translated into German by Pastor Lehmpfuhl and published in 1906 under the title "*Der vorchristliche Jesus*," Professor Smith endeavored to prove that Jesus of Nazareth never existed as a human personality, but that Jesus was the name of a god worshipped by Jews before the Christian era. He based his contention chiefly upon a passage in Epiphanius (d. 403 A.D.) referring to a Jewish sect called Nasaraeans, a formula of conjuration in a Paris papyrus of the fourth century A.D. mentioning "the god of the Hebrews, Jesus, etc.," a Naasene hymn speaking of Jesus preserved by Hippolytus (d. after 235 A.D.), and the phrase "the things concerning Jesus" in Acts xviii, 24 ff. It does not seem possible to admit any of these passages as evidence of such a pre-Christian divinity, as the present writer has shown in his article on "The New Jesus Myth" in *The International Journal of Ethics*, Oct., 1911.

In this volume Professor Smith seeks to support his view by an examination of the Fourth Gospel, the synoptics, and the Jewish and pagan writers whose testimony has been adduced for the existence of Jesus as a man. Liberal theologians have long recognized that the allegorical method was used to a large extent in the last of our canonical gospels, and there is little that is new or that will be seriously criticised in the author's remarks on this subject. Nor does Professor Smith go far beyond the modern historico-critical school in his treatment of the non-Christian writers, as may be readily seen by a comparison with Réville's *Jesus de Nazareth*, 1897, and *The Prophet of Nazareth*, 1905, by the present writer. The only noteworthy exception is the story of the Neronian persecution by Tacitus. While the historic value of this account may be questioned, Professor Smith's attempt to prove that it is an interpolation is not very convincing.

It is in his manner of dealing with the synoptic gospels that Professor Smith parts with the majority of critics. Like Bruno Bauer and a number of eminent Dutch theologians, he maintains that here, as well as in the Fourth Gospel, all is symbolism and nothing history. It is not the Logos, but the god Jesus, who in these gospels walks upon the earth, and upon whose lips are put, not Philonian philosophy, but an anthology of parables and apothegms gathered from everywhere. While students generally see a gradual apotheosis of Jesus of which the Messiahship was the beginning and absolute godhead the end, the author perceives only a projection of a divine personalty into an imaginary human life, and it does not seem strange to him that imagination should emphasize his humanity more strongly in the earlier form of the story (the synoptics) than in the later (the Fourth Gospel). Scholars who have tried by textual and literary criticism, by retroversion of the Greek sayings into the

dialect of Aramaic spoken in Galilee, and by comparison of earlier and manifestly later material to recover the first form of the tradition and to gain historic ground have often differed widely in their conception of the Nazarene, while agreeing as regards his purely human character. To Professor Smith they all seem to be engaged in constructing arbitrarily a picture of their human ideal. This is not altogether fair. The subjective element is present in all historiography, and is necessarily marked where the material is scarce and offers peculiar difficulties to the interpreter. In the case of Jesus we do not possess the kind of sources which the historian most highly prizes, autographs, accounts by contemporaries, documents in the original. We have at best a very fragmentary record, overlaid by tradition, and extant only in a Greek translation. But the historian of today has learned not to despise or neglect such secondary sources. At bottom it is a question of relative probability, and the continued labor of philologists, exegetes, and critics will no doubt in course of time bring about a substantial consensus of responsible opinion that shall satisfy all demands of historic objectivity. It is not impossible that Professor Smith's criticism may help to accentuate the view that a certain allegorical element, an unconscious influence of the Hellenistic spirit, should be recognized, not only in the synoptic gospels, but in the actual teaching of Jesus himself.

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The Christ Myth. By ARTHUR DREWS. Translated from the Third Edition (Revised and Enlarged) by C. DELISLE BURNS. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, n.d.—pp. 304.

Professor Drews has stirred profoundly Germany's religious world by this book and his effective work as a platform speaker and debater during the last three years. Like a second Luther, he has challenged the theologians to public disputations, and vast crowds have been present at these contests in the leading cities of the empire. His main thesis is the unhistorical character of Jesus. Depending largely upon the extensive material brought together, without much critical sifting, by John M. Robertson, an English parliamentarian and man of letters, and the arguments presented, with keen dialectic but with insufficient historical evidence, by the American mathematician and philosopher William Benjamin Smith, he has proclaimed far and wide the existence of a god Jesus worshipped by a Jewish cult-community before the Christian era. But neither Professor Drews nor Professor Smith has been able to show a shrine, a priest, a worshipper, or an oracle of this god, or the slightest trace of his existence in the minds of men in any document earlier than our era. Nor is there any evidence of such "a syncretistic religious system, composed of Babylonian, Persian, Jewish and Greek ingredients, which rules the whole of Western Asia in the last centuries before Christ, and whose followers called themselves Adonaei, after the name of the supposed founder, Ado," as Professor Drew describes, p. 54.

It is widely recognized by theologians that historic Christianity is not the